

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

DRC-01 /093 W

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R 201315Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4366

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8466

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINT, AR (ISABEL DE PERON)

SUBJECT: VICE-PRESIDENT ACHIEVES HIGH LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: SIX MONTHS AGO THE THOUGHT OF ISABEL DE PERON ACTING AS PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE STARTED EVERYONE THINKING OF MILITARY REACTION IN THE FORM OF A COUP. YESTERDAY, NOV 19, WITH PERON IN URUGUAY, SHE DID ACT AS PRESIDENT. THIS INDICATES DEGREE OF ACCEPTABILITY SHE HAS ACHIEVED (AND HOW SITUATION HAS CHANGED IN PAST FEW MONTHS). THERE ARE, HOWEVER, STILL LIMITS BEYOND WHICH SHE IS CAREFUL NOT TO PRESS...AT LAST YET. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH GEN PERON SPENDING SEVERAL HOURS ACROSS THE RIVER IN MONTEVIDEO YESTERDAY AT THE SIGNING OF THE ARGENTINE-URUGUAYAN BOUNDARY AGREEMENT, VICE-PRESIDENT MARIA ESTELA MARTINEZ DE PERON WAS LEFT IN CHARGE. TO THE BEST OF THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, SHE THUS BECAME FIRST WOMAN IN HISTORY TO ACT AS PRESIDENT OF A WESTERN HEMISPHERE COUNTRY, EVEN IF ONLY FOR MATTER OF HOURS. BOTH PERONIST AND PRESS SOURCES, MOREOVER, INDICATE THAT PLAN IS FOR HER TO ACT AS PRESIDENT AS WELL DURING PERON'S COMING TRIP TO THE UN. AND EVEN WITH PERON AT HOME, SHE IS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE, BOTH WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

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AND IN THE GOVERNMENT. IN LATTER CAPACITY, FOR EXAMPLE, SHE IS

NOT ONLY DEALING WITH SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEMS, BUT IS ALSO TAKING OVER FOR PERON BETWEEN NOON AND ABOUT 4 P.M.-- HIS REST PERIOD. MAJOR DECISIONS REPORTEDLY ARE DEFERRED UNTIL NEXT MORNING, OR, IF URGENT, UNTIL EVENING, BUT SHE APPARENTLY MAKES ALL THOSE BELOW THAT LEVEL ON HER OWN RESPONSIBILITY.

3. IN SUM, SENORA DE PERON HAS BEEN ACCEPTED AS VICE-PRESIDENT TO A DEGREE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS UNTHINKABLE ONLY SIX MONTHS AGO. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT SHE HAS OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES. SHE HAS ADDRESSED AND CALLED ON SENATE AT LEAST ONCE SINCE TAKING OFFICE, BUT APPARENTLY HAS NOT YET PRESIDED OVER A SESSION AS PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. ACCORDING TO PERONIST CONTACTS, THIS IS MATTER OF NOT WANTING TO GRIND FACES OF SENATORS TOO HARD. THERE IS STILL SOME RESISTANCE TO IDEA OF WOMAN PRESIDING OVER THEIR SESSIONS AND, SOURCES SAY, IT IS PERON'S STYLE TO LET THEM GET ACCUSTOMED TO THE IDEA RATHER THAN FORCING IT UPON THEM.

4. THERE IS STILL SOME RESISTANCE, TOO, ON PART OF MILITARY. LATTER ACCEPT HER AS VICE-PRESIDENT BUT ARE RELUCTANT TO BE PLACED IN POSITION OF FORMALLY PAYING HER ATTENDING HONORS. WE UNDERSTAND, MOREOVER, THAT PERON'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE CEREMONIES YESTERDAY WERE CAREFULLY ARRANGED SO THAT MILITARY DID NOT HAVE TO PAY SENORA DE PERON HONORS AS PRESIDENT OF NATION.  
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**TAGS:** PINT, AR, (ISABEL DE PERON)  
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